

## REVIEWS

**THE SENILE BRAIN: A CLINICAL STUDY.** By R. S. Allison, V.R.D., M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M. (Pp. vi + 288; figs. 16. 50s.) London: Arnold, 1962.

MOST of the best neurological text books have been written by clinicians of long experience, who have gathered their favourite flowers from the gardens of their best years and made of them a gift to their friends and followers. This is such a book. To call it a textbook is not quite correct, for it is rather a series of interdigitated essays on the general subject of the intellectual disorders of organic cerebral disease.

Over twenty years, Dr. Allison has studied intensively 198 patients with "senile brains," that is brains damaged by trauma, atherosclerosis, tumour or toxins in such a way that they present a symptom complex of organic dementia.

The essays are first, last and all the time, clinical. The first part of the book deals with methods of casetaking and examination, and the reader is taken through a wide field of medicine, surgery and neurology, showing at how many points the "senile brain" touches on the daily problems of them all. The second, and largest part is the real meat of the book, covering disorders of consciousness, memory, speech, language, orientation and the many specific agnosias. In the third part problems in differential diagnosis and treatment are considered, and here again the author's wide knowledge and familiarity with all the fields of medicine related to his own is evident.

The preface opens, "This work is principally a record of personal experience," and so it is, but it is a great deal more. Dr. Allison's own meticulous observations and thoughts are set against a wide background of European and American literature—the bibliography contains three hundred references—and the essays are full of distilled wisdom. Their main charm, however, is in their teaching style. Dr. Allison writes as he teaches, and, as well as being a valuable contribution to British Neurology, this book will be an especial delight to all his colleagues, who have enjoyed listening to him, and to his multitude of student friends who have sat at his feet so attentively and in such large numbers over the years.

A. R. T.

**CARE OF THE NEWLY BORN INFANT.** By W. S. Craig, B.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.P. Second Edition. (Pp. 568; figs. 262. 40s.) Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1962.

THIS is an admirable and delightful book which covers the essential embryology necessary for the understanding of normal and abnormal development; the care of the healthy neo-nate in all its aspects; and all varieties of misadventure from congenital malformations to trauma and infection.

The technical difficulty of obtaining sizeable samples of blood, etc., from the new-born has helped to ensure that neo-natal paediatrics retains a strong clinical bias, but it is refreshing to find so much emphasis given to the importance of precise personal observations and such detailed interpretations of them. This makes the book of special value to the family doctor and the midwife, but will also please those paediatricians who have been beginning to feel slightly old-fashioned in relying mainly on the evidence of their senses.

A reference to the "Midwife as Paediatric Nurse" gives great satisfaction to the reviewer, who has always believed that a midwife's wide experience of healthy babies makes her particularly alert to the slight departures from normal which are the earliest signs of impending trouble, and also encourages her to expect, and often secure, survival even in the most desperate case.

The chapter on breast feeding is excellent, but the remark (true though it is!) that "references to human milk as 'the food intended by nature' are more likely to foster scepticism than to provoke response" started up a philosophical digression! Assuming (a generous premise) that mothers do, in fact, consider only their babies' welfare and not